

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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VERONICA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE."
IN FIVE BOOKS.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER XIII. JOE DOWSETT'S NEWS.

It was not far from ten o'clock when Joe Dowsett returned from Shipley Magna. Joe was in some respects an excellent servant, but he had his failings—among which might be reckoned an inability to resist strong liquor when proffered gratuitously. During twenty years Joe had not been known to be drunk at his own expense. But a visit to the Crown at Shipley Magna, where he was an old crony and customer of the head ostler, was pretty sure to result in Joe's partial intoxication.

On the present occasion he had ridden to Shipley and back on the old pony, the sole beast of burthen belonging to the vicar. And Joe attributed the enormous amount of time occupied in the journey, to his own remarkable humanity to the pony.

"Mustn't press him hard, the old beast," said Joe, on his return, standing before the kitchen fire, the heat of which caused his wet clothes to steam again.

"No fear of your pressing him hard to come away from the Crown," retorted Joanna. "I advise you to get to your bed, and take off them damp things. Else you'll be getting a fever, or the rheumaticks, or something. Only," she added, under her breath, "only we know there's a special providence for certain folks; and I'm sure you're one on 'em this night, Joe Dowsett."

"All right, Jo-anna. I feel pretty comfortable, thank 'ee. No, no; mustn't press the old pony. The merciful man is merciful to his beast."

At this moment Catherine came back from the sitting-room, whither she had been, according to orders, to give her master the tidings of Joe's return.

"Master's fine and vexed," she said, "at Joe being so late. He said he wanted to send Joe to fetch home Miss Veronica if he had come at any reasonable hour. But now it's too late."

"Why was he unwilling to let her stay at Mrs. Plew's?" asked Joanna.

"O, I don't know. Miss Veronica has stayed there before. But the vicar said as he'd have gone to fetch her hisself, only it's such a night, and been getting worse and worse since sundown. I think master feels lonely after being used to Sir John's company. And then both the young ladies being away the first evening and all—it's made him cross. He says he shall go to bed, and you're to send him up a slice of dry toast and a glass of negus, with not too much nutmeg in it."

"Negus ain't a bad thing," observed Joe Dowsett.

"You go to your bed, Joe, for mercy's sake!" cried the old woman, impatiently. "Don't stand a steaming there like a copper on washing day."

"I feel pretty comfortable, Jo-anna. I see a friend of yours at the Crown this evening—Mr. Paul."

"Paul at the Crown!" exclaimed Catherine.

"Yes, Paul at the Crown. He pretended not to see me, and skulked through the tap-room like a rat. Sir John's a gentleman. I say nothing against Sir John. But Paul—Paul's a sneak."

"Don't you talk nonsense. Paul never did you no harm," said Joanna. "And I don't believe you saw him at all to-night."

"You don't believe—?"

"No, I don't. Him and his master was to sleep at Danecester last night, and go off by an early train this morning. It ain't likely as Paul should be at the Crown at Shipley Magna all alone. You must have took somebody else for him. Paul would have spoke to you, if it had been him. Why shouldn't he?"

Joe turned on her with crushing severity.

"P'raps you'll say I was drunk next, Jo-anna!"

"O Lord no, I shan't say so. Maybe you were dreaming. But never mind now. Go to bed; there's a good man."

It proved very difficult indeed to induce Joe to go to bed, however. He protested over and over again that he felt pretty comfortable. Then he required Joanna and Catherine to declare solemnly that they believed his statement about having seen Paul: which, finding it hopeless to get him to go to bed on any other terms, they unscrupulously did. Then he very unexpectedly declared that he and Paul had lived together like brothers; that there was no one for whom he felt a warmer regard; and that Paul's cold and unkind behaviour had cut him to the heart. At last, by dint of scolding and coaxing, he was got to his own room; the door of which Joanna shut, with a fervent prayer that they might not all be burnt in their beds, and with a gleam of comfort in the knowledge that the end of candle entrusted to Joe could not last above five minutes.

"Ain't it queer, Joe taking that notion about seeing Paul?" said Catherine, when she and Joanna were alone together. "Do you think it could ha' been—could ha' been—what's that you call it when a person's ghost walks before they're dead, as a kind of a warning. Like that story you tell of the eldest son where you lived kitchen-maid long ago? Oh, I know—a fetch. That's the name. Do you think it could ha' been Paul's fetch?"

"Pooh, child! Servants don't have no fetches. Them kind of things only belongs to great families. Don't you go scaring your wits with such fancies, or I shall never tell you no more of my stories."

"But," persisted the girl, "Joe said that the figure passed through the room very quick and silent, and with its head turned away, and—"

"Well, if its head was turned away, how was Joe to know who it was? It's just a drunken man's fancy, I tell you. Go to your bed. It's nigh upon eleven, and I

have seen to the fastenings of the doors. Good-night. When Joe's sober to-morrow, he will tell another story, I warrant."

But the next morning Joe told no other story. On the contrary, he persisted in his former assertion, and confirmed it by proof, which it was impossible to doubt. He had remarked Paul's presence at the Crown to his friend the head ostler, and the ostler had said, yes; he knew him well enough. He was the foreign servant of that rich barrowknight, as owned such neat nags, and had put up at the Crown for his hunting quarters. But in reply to a question as to what Paul had come there for, the ostler professed ignorance. It might be to fetch some traps of his master's. The ostler believed that there had been a pork-manty or something of that kind left in the landlord's care. Paul had brought a fly from the hotel at Danecester, and was to go back in it. So he (the ostler) supposed that he had to carry luggage.

"But why Paul shouldn't speak to me I don't know, nor I don't much care," said Joe Dowsett, whose feelings towards his dear friend had come down to their ordinary level of stolid indifference, since the influence of his potations had subsided.

"I couldn't have believed as Paul would have give hisself such airs," exclaimed Catherine, with a toss of her head. She felt that Paul's slight of Joe Dowsett was a reflection on the rest of the vicar's household.

About eleven o'clock in the forenoon Maud arrived from Lowater. Captain Sheardown had driven her to Shipley, and had set her down at the vicarage without alighting himself, purposing to proceed to Haymoor.

"Where is Veronica?" was Maud's first question to her guardian.

"Veronica has displeased me very much," answered the vicar. "She went to drink tea with old Mrs. Plew, and chose to remain there all night, although she knows—or might know if she had any sort of filial desire to ascertain my sentiments on any subject whatever—that I object to her putting herself under any obligation of that kind to the Plews."

Maud looked grave, but said sweetly, "Please don't be very angry with her, Uncle Charles. It was a dreadfully stormy night. Perhaps she was afraid of the walk home."

"She was assuredly not afraid of incurring my displeasure, whatever else she may have feared," said the vicar.

Maud made no further direct efforts to avert her guardian's wrath; but she took the most effectual means of putting him into a good humour, by gaily chatting about all the little incidents of her visit to Lowater, the concert at Danecester, and the people who had been to the house.

She was in the midst of her talk, sitting, still with her hat in her hand, in the vicar's study, when the door of the room was opened a very little way, and a voice cried: "Miss Maud, Miss Maud! Would ye please step here a moment?"

The voice was old Joanna's; but so strange and muffled in its tone, that an unreasoning apprehension of impending evil fell upon Maud's heart.

She sprang up, and forcing a smile, said: "Uncle Charles, I must go for an instant to say a word to Joanna. I'll be back as soon as possible. The dear old woman has some mighty mystery on hand."

She closed the study door with an instinctive care, for which she could never afterwards account, and faced a countenance which seemed, like Medusa's fabled head, to turn her into stone.

The countenance was Joanna's. But so changed, ghastly, and aged was it that Maud would hardly, under other circumstances, have recognised the familiar features.

"What is the matter, Joanna?" she asked, in quick low tones, whose firmness surprised herself.

"My dear Maudie," answered the trembling old woman, "my sweet young lady, don't ye lose *your* head. It's all we've got to depend on! I feel my years now, as I never felt 'em before."

Maud made a silent, eloquent gesture of impatience.

"Yes, I will speak, deary. Mr.—Mr. Plew's here. He looked in by—by—chance like. And—O Lord be merciful to us, and spare us!—he says, Miss Veronica is not at his mother's, and what's more, hasn't been there all night. And what to do, or what to say, or what will become of the vicar, I don't know!"

"Hush! Where is Mr. Plew? Take me to him. There is some mistake, some misunderstanding. No harm can have happened to Veronica, here, in her own home, amongst her own people! It is impossible!"

"O my deary, Mr. Plew is more like a mad creature than anything else. And as to harm—. My innocent young lady, it goes to my heart to hurt you, but I'm afraid—I'm sore afraid—"

"Of what?"

The old woman made no answer, but moaned and wrung her hands.

A dreadful apprehension took hold of Maud that Mr. Plew had brought some fatal and decisive tidings; that Veronica was dead, and that the old servant was endeavouring to break the news to her. Collecting her senses as well as she could, she bade Joanna take her to Mr. Plew at once, and let her know the worst.

Joanna pointed to the door of the dining-parlour, and Maud sprang into the room.

CHAPTER XIV. FLED.

JOANNA had not much exaggerated in saying that Mr. Plew was "more like a madman than anything else." He did seem to have nearly lost his senses.

"O, Miss Desmond!" he cried, as soon as he caught sight of Maud, and then stood dumb with clasped hands.

"Please to tell me at once. It will be kinder, indeed it will! Is she dead?"

The utterance of the word seemed to force a gush of tears from Maud's eyes, but she struggled hard to command herself.

The little surgeon recovered some spark of manhood and courage, at sight of the young girl's piteous, innocent face. His professional helpfulness came to his aid, and took him away from the contemplation of his own distress.

"Don't try too violently to force back your tears," he said. "Let them come. You will not let them master you. No; I do not think Veronica is dead. No, on my honour. I would not deceive you!"

"What is it then? Is she ill? Has there been any accident? Is she in danger?"

"I wish to Heaven, Miss Desmond, that I could answer your questions. All I know is, that Miss Levincourt did not sleep at my mother's house last night—did not even go there at all—and yet she sent word here by the boy that she meant to do so."

"But the boy may have mistaken her message. She may have said that she was going elsewhere. Have you asked? Have you inquired in the village? Joanna's face and—yours have infected me with terror. But I cannot—I cannot—believe that there is any real ground for alarm."

"Alarm!" echoed the voice of Mr. Levincourt, and the next instant he stood in the room.

Any attempt at concealment was out of the question. A glance at the faces of

Maud and Mr. Plew sufficed to show the vicar that some terrible misfortune had happened.

"Dear Uncle Charles," said Maud, taking his hand, "Mr. Plew has told us that Veronica was not at his mother's house last night. Don't, pray don't, give way to terror, dear Uncle Charles. It has been some mistake of Jemmy Sack. I am sure, quite sure of it. What harm *can* have happened? We should have been sure to hear of any accident, you know. Ill news always travels quickly. We were startled, at first, but now I am coming to my senses a little, and I see how foolish it was to be so frightened!"

The poor child was trembling in every limb, and the hand with which she clasped the vicar's was as cold as marble.

Some men in Mr. Levincourt's case would have rushed instantly forth; would have sought here and there; would have inquired feverishly; would, in brief, have been spurred by their anxiety into immediate energy and action.

But the vicar was at first stunned, not stimulated, by the blow. He sank down in a chair like one whose bodily powers had been suddenly paralysed.

"The first thing to be done," said Maud, "is to send Joe into the village. Let him go to Sack's farm and try to find Jemmy. Then he might go or send to the Meggitts. It is possible that Veronica may have gone there. Miss Turtle and the girls were always asking her. And you will make inquiries, won't you Mr. Plew? I see more and more, how foolish it was to be so frightened!"

The vicar, as he recovered from the first shock and as Maud's elastic courage and young hopefulness rose higher and higher, and began to chase away the first ghastly fear that had crushed him, displayed an unexpected phase of feeling: he grew angry. He resented the pain he had been made to suffer.

"I think, Mr. Plew," he said, in a voice whose trembling tones were by no means under control, "I must say that I think it highly inconsiderate on your part to come here and cause so very terrible—so unspeakably terrible—an alarm, without having better grounds for it."

The little man, who seemed to be entirely uninfluenced by Maud's cheering suggestions, stood silent, and cast an appealing glance at the young girl.

"Law dear, sir!" cried old Joanna, who had remained in the room, "don't ye say

that! Mr. Plew came here without knowing a thing about Miss Veronica. He was took aback and scared well-nigh as much as you was, when I opened the door and asked him where she was, and why she hadn't come home with him."

"Is Joe gone? Is he going?" exclaimed the vicar, rising from his chair, and speaking now with nervous rapidity. "Why does no one exert any energy? I shall go in one direction myself—Joe must take another—to Sack's farm—d'ye hear? And, Plew, you will—you will search—" Then a sudden terror overcame him, and he fell back into the chair again with a groan. "My child! my child!" he cried. "Oh, my child! At this moment she may be—dead!"

"No, no, no—not that!" exclaimed Mr. Plew, eagerly. "Not that! I do not believe she is dead. I do not believe she is hurt. That is not what I fear."

"Then, sir, what is it you do fear? It is not this, and it is not that! What means have you of knowing? And how should you understand a parent's natural apprehensions, or undertake to limit them? Have you," he added, suddenly, having caught a glance of intelligence that passed between the surgeon and Joanna: "have you any information that you are concealing from me?"

"No! No!"

"You have! I see it in your face—and in hers. Joanna, I insist, I command, you to speak! Plew, if you think it kind to keep me in suspense, you are cruelly mistaken. Tell me the truth!"

"Mr. Levincourt, as God is my witness, I know nothing! I do not, upon my soul! But I—I had a momentary fear—a mere momentary suspicion—that——"

"*Suspicion, sir!*"

"That—that Miss Levincourt might have left her home, purposing not to return to it."

"H—how *dare* you?" gasped the vicar; and then suddenly ceased, as though the words were arrested in his throat and were almost choking him.

"Untie his neckcloth!" cried the surgeon, springing forward. The vicar waved him off, but suffered old Joanna to obey Mr. Plew's directions.

Maud looked from one to another in an agony of bewilderment.

"Left her home!" she exclaimed. "Veronica leave her home, purposing not to return to it! How? Why?"

"Whisht, my deary!" muttered Joanna,

still busied about her master. "Don't ye give way. It may not be so bad as we're afraid."

"So bad as what? What does Mr. Plew mean? What are you all afraid of? Oh, Veronica!"

"Here he is, sir! Here's Jemmy!" cried Joe Dowsett, dragging Jemmy Sack into the room after him. "I was on my way to the farm when I met him. Now speak, you young rascal, and tell his reverence what Miss Veronica said to you!"

The boy was flushed, panting, and very much frightened. Joe had expended a great part of his own painful excitement in haling Jemmy Sack to the vicarage with very unnecessary violence.

"I bain't a young rascal!" said Jemmy, driven to bay. "And I told the message here last night as Miss Veroniky said, so I did."

"Don't be afraid, Jemmy," said Maud, trying to soothe the boy. "No one will hurt you. You have done no harm."

"No, I knows I haven't!" retorted Jemmy.

"But you will tell us what—what Miss Veronica said, won't you, Jemmy? We are all in sad trouble because we're afraid some harm has happened to her, and we want to find out where she is."

The sight of the sweet, pale face, down which the tears were now streaming fast, and the sound of the sweet, tremulous voice, instantly melted the boy's heart, and he professed his readiness to say all that he knew. But that amounted to very little. He had seen Miss Veronica at the school-house. But she had not remained until the end of the practising. Before leaving, she had said to Jemmy that she was going to Mrs. Plew's house to drink tea, and that, as the evening was turning out wet, she should sleep there. Jemmy was to go and take that message to the vicarage. But he was not to go until quite late; not until after seven o'clock at all events. And Miss Veronica had given him a silver sixpence, and bade him earn it honestly by doing exactly as she told him.

"And so I did," protested Jemmy. "I niver goe'd near the vicarage until nigh upon eight o'clock, and it was powering wi' rain, and I was soaked through, and when I got home, daddy thrashed me."

Old Joanna stood by, emphasising every word that the boy uttered, by a nod of the head, a sigh, or a gesture with uplifted hands; as who should say, "Aye, aye! It is just as I thought!" Ever since the speak-

ing of those words by Mr. Plew, which so aroused the vicar's indignation, the latter had sat passive—almost sullen—in his chair. He had listened to Jemmy Sack's story in silence, and had apparently relinquished his purpose of going forth to seek his daughter. Now he rose, as though struck by a sudden idea, and hastily left the room. His footsteps were heard ascending the staircase, and entering the apartment overhead. It was Veronica's chamber. The steps ceased, and there was silence in the house. The little group in the dining parlour stood staring blankly at each other. Maud's tears had ceased to flow. She was frozen by a new, and but half-comprehended fear.

Presently Catherine ran in from the kitchen. People had come to give what information they could. By this time the whole village was acquainted with Veronica's disappearance. Roger the ploughman's wife had seen Miss Levincourt by herself, walking along the Shipley Magna road very fast. Miss had not said good afternoon to her. But she (Roger's wife) thought she might not have seen her, for she was going along in a quick, scared kind of a way, looking straight before her.

Immediately after this woman, appeared a witness who testified to having seen the vicar's daughter in a carriage, driving swiftly on the road between Shipley Magna and Danecester, between five and six o'clock on the previous evening.

This man was the Shipley-in-the-Wold and Danecester carrier, who knew Veronica well by sight, as he did most people within a circuit of twenty miles round Shipley. He had just heard, he said, down at the Red Cow, that the young lady was missing. So he thought he would step up and say when and where he had last seen her.

On hearing the first words of this man's story, Maud had rushed breathlessly upstairs to call her guardian. In a few minutes she returned alone to the door of the dining-room, and beckoned Mr. Plew to come to her.

The babble of voices, which had arisen high and confused when she had left the room, ceased suddenly as soon as her white face was seen again in the doorway. There was a pause of expectation.

"What is it?" whispered Mr. Plew, obeying Maud's summons.

"Will you please step into the study to Uncle Charles for a moment, Mr. Plew?"

She preceded him into the study. The

vicar was sitting there with a paper in his hand.

"Is there news?" cried Mr. Plew, eagerly.

The vicar's face showed a strange agitation: an agitation different from the first emotions of surprise and alarm which he had exhibited on learning that his daughter was not to be found.

"Yes," he said; "there is news. I am—happy—thankful—that Veronica is in safety. It has been a false alarm—a mistake. I am quite relieved."

"Thank God!" cried the surgeon, fervently.

Mr. Levincourt tried to speak with some degree of self-control. His hand shook, and his features twitched.

"I have cause to be thankful," he began, and then suddenly broke down and turned away. "Tell him what I wanted, Maud," he murmured in a stifled voice. Then he bent his arms on the table, and bowed his head, and hid his face in his hands.

"Will you do us the great kindness," said Maud, addressing the surgeon, "to get rid of all those people? Thank them, and say—what is fitting."

"But what am I to say?"

Maud glanced at the vicar, but seeing him motionless, with his face buried in his hands, she answered:

"Mr. Levincourt wishes them to be told that Veronica is in perfect safety. There is no cause for alarm. He has found a letter from her."

"Impress upon them," murmured the vicar, with still averted face, "that there has been a—misunderstanding. If I had seen the letter sooner—Miss Levincourt did not leave my house without informing me."

Mr. Plew, still hesitating, Maud made an imploring gesture.

"Pray, pray, Mr. Plew, send those people away!"

Mr. Plew proceeded to obey the vicar's directions as well as he could. The poor little man's heart was aching and his spirit was troubled. At length he succeeded in inducing the little crowd to depart. They went unwillingly and with a perfect hunger of unsatisfied curiosity. They would fain have lingered in the kitchen to talk and to hear, but old Joanna very unceremoniously bade them begone, and was obdurate towards all attempts at discussing the question of Miss Veronica's departure.

"I know no more than my betters chooses to tell me," said Joanna. "Thank

God the lass isn't murdered, nor any way hurt, nor yet drowned, nor yet kidnapped. That's all I know. And her father knows where she is. And so I don't see as the rest is any of our businesses."

"Mr. Plew," said the vicar, when the surgeon, having knocked at the door of the study, had been re-admitted by Maud: "Mr. Plew, if I showed undue resentment for what you said just now, I ask your pardon."

"Oh, Mr. Levincourt! Don't, pray don't speak of my pardon! But—Miss Desmond said you had found a letter——"

"I have found a letter from my daughter, and I am going to London to-night."

"To-night!"

"Yes."

"To meet Miss Levincourt?"

"To meet Miss Levincourt if possible. I take Maud with me. I may be absent some time, and she cannot remain here alone. I shall place her under the protection of her aunt, Lady Tallis, who is in London. If you are asked about Miss Desmond, I wish you to be able to say that *she*, at least, is in safety."

There was a bitterness in the vicar's tone as he spoke the last words, which sent a pang through the surgeon's heart. He was, as Joanna had called him, "a soft little man."

"I hope," said he, wistfully, "that I may be able to say so of *Ve*—of Miss Levincourt too."

"Mr. Plew, I believe you are a sincere friend, and that you wish well to us all," said the vicar, suddenly. "I will trust you."

"You may, Mr. Levincourt. I—of course I knew all along that it was of no use; and I never—scarcely ever—allowed myself to feel anything like hope. She was so superior in every way. But I am not altogether selfish. Veronica's happiness is very dear to me. It's all over now, of course. But if—if there is anything in the world I can do for you, or for her, you may be sure I shall not flinch."

The vicar took the little man's hand. "Ah!" he moaned, with the cruel candour of a man absorbed in his own trouble: "it might have been better if she had been able to bring herself to care for you. Anything would have been better than this! She has run away, Mr. Plew;—run away with that——" he checked himself, "with Sir John Gale."

"I knew it!" cried the surgeon. "I am not surprised." But his face grew deadly pale as he spoke.

"Let it turn out as it may," resumed the vicar, "I cannot easily forgive her. She has been ungrateful and deceitful. But she is my child, my only child. I cannot abandon her to her fate. She writes me here, that Sir John had private reasons for making a secret marriage——"

"Marriage! Is she married?"

"If she is not, he shall answer it, the infernal villain! But," added the vicar, recovering himself somewhat, "you perceive how all-important it may be not to give evil tongues a handle. You will speak of—you will defend—a runaway match, nothing more. That is bad enough. I must go to London to-night. A train leaves Danecester at midnight. I might drive to a bye-station at once, but I should be no better off. We must wait for the twelve o'clock mail; there is no direct train to London between this hour and midnight. Every hour seems an age."

"Yes, yes; you must go. God grant you may find her! Have you any clue?"

"A few words dropped by that man's servant. And his own intention, expressed some time ago, of going to Italy. If I can but be in time to prevent their leaving England——"

"And Miss Desmond goes with you?"

"Yes. My poor Maudie! Ah, how little your mother thought to what contact with misery and disgrace she was exposing you when she bequeathed you to my care!"

They were the first words of consideration for any human being's suffering, save his own, that the vicar had spoken.

Arrangements were hastily made for the departure that evening. Mr. Plew was helpful and active. He ordered a vehicle to take the vicar and his ward to Danecester at seven o'clock. Old Joanna was to be in charge of the house. Catherine sobbed as she packed up a few clothes for Maud.

"Seems like as if a earthquake had comed and swallowed us all up, miss," said Catherine. The vicar had fought hard to show a brave front to the servants, to keep up appearances; but without much success; for there was no conviction at the bottom of his own heart to enable him to persuade others that all would be well with his daughter. He was too much a man of the world to give credence to the assertion made in the hurried letter left behind her by Veronica, that weighty private reasons had prevented Sir John. Gale from openly demanding her hand, and had induced him to urge her to consent to a

clandestine marriage. "For a man of his age and position, there can exist no such reasons," muttered the vicar between his clenched teeth. "Miserable, wretched, misguided, degraded, girl! But if there is justice on earth he shall marry her. He shall find that he cannot thus outrage and defy the world. He shall marry her by——"

The dusk was falling when the vicar and his ward drove away from the garden gate of the vicarage. As they passed the spot where Sir John Gale had been found bleeding and insensible on the ground, Mr. Levincourt closed his eyes and groaned aloud.

Maud started, as the scene recalled to her mind the fact that the accident had happened little more than two months ago.

"Two months!" she said to herself, while the tears blinded her eyes and streamed down her cheeks. "How happy we were, only two months ago!"

THE HONEST MINER.

ONE autumn, a year or two ago, in pursuit of my travels, I struck into the wild mountain region of Southern Oregon, just north of the California boundary line. I had not gone far on the trail before I overtook a stalwart, grey-shirted, knee-booted individual. He had a pack of scarlet blankets strapped on his back, and as he trudged along, for want of better company, he held an animated conversation with himself: an oath being most innocently introduced every now and then, when the merits of the case seemed to call for it. He was an old gold-digger returning to his favourite "creek." He had been off, on one of the usual digger wild-goose chases, after some fancied El Dorado at a distance; but was returning, disappointed, to the place where he had mined for many a year. Every locality was familiar to him. As we walked together over the mountain, or by the banks of the creek or stream, down in the wooded valley, my companion would point out to me, with a half-regretful pride, the places where "big strikes" had been made in former times. Pointing to a ruined log cabin, out of the door of which a coyote wolf rushed, he assured me that the owner of that cabin had washed some forty thousand dollars out of a patch twenty or thirty yards in extent.

"Was he a white man?" I asked; for there are numbers of Chinese miners in that section of country.

"Wal," was the reply, "not muchly; he war a Dutchman."

In Pacific Coast parlance, it appeared a "white man" did not altogether refer to the colour of his face but to the quality of his soul, and meant a good fellow and a right sort of man; and that Dutchmen or Germans, and

the inhabitants of the north of Europe generally are not classed under that title. They are too saving, too steady, and possibly too clannish; for, though he does become an American citizen as soon as he arrives, this is with no view to any political principles he entertains, but solely to facilitate the pre-emption of land, the acquisition of a lager-beer brewery, or the opening of a corner grocery.

Cañon Creek, as the locality was named, had once, I was told, been a "bully old diggin'," but the stream having been pretty well washed out, the miners had decamped to parts unknown, leaving no address behind them. Like the Arabs, they folded their tents, and silently moved away. Here was a half-ruined building, choked up with weeds, bearing record that it had been once the El Dorado Saloon—in other words, a gambling hell, or worse—and around it were a few cabins. This had been the town site, and the projectors no doubt imagined that it was to be "the right smart chance of a city." However, fate had decided otherwise, and the only traces of former greatness to be seen, were piles of stones and gravel, and long trenches, and half-ruined ditches, which gave the spot the appearance of a place where some great engineering operations had been left half finished. Here and there, a solitary Chinese slunk about, intent on his own business, and, if my companion were to be believed, in pursuit of stray cats. As we turned a corner of the rough trail, we suddenly emerged in front of the store; by the door were sitting half a dozen of the old habitués of the creek, lazily talking. My friend was delighted.

"There they are!" he cried, "loafing about, chawin' baccy, jest as nat'ral as anythin'!"

He seemed to be a popular man among them. As his friend (friendships are quickly made in the West) I was received with vociferations of welcome, and the choice of half a dozen shanties to "spread a blanket in." In this way I saw a good deal of the honest miner of Cañon Creek, and learned not a little of his ways of life and thought, in this lonely little dell in the Californian mountains. Of course, we have all read about the miner in California, British Columbia, or Australia; about his extravagance, his boisterousness, and his conduct generally; and we are all too apt to think of him only as the roystering blade in the palmy days of 1849 or 1853, when gold could be had for the picking up. The typical miner in 1869 is a very different man from that of 1849, even though he be the same individual. No longer do you, as a rule, see the many fine-looking handsome fellows of the early days of California, fifteen or twenty years ago. They were all young then, but hardship has told upon them; for, in many cases they have pursued, with varying luck, that business of gold-digging ever since. The 'forty-niners are the "blue blood" of the coast, but they are proverbially poor. Accordingly, these men, among whom I associated on Cañon Creek, were very different from our usual notion of the gold-

miner, but were yet at the same time very characteristic types of what is well known on the Rocky Mountain slopes as the "honest miner." He is a peculiar individual, and differs in many respects from the settler of late years. Enter his cabin, and there is always indubitable evidence of a miserable life of single blessedness. The gold-digger is almost universally unmarried. The rough blanket-spread cot; the axe-hewn table, with its scanty array of crockery; the old battered stove, or fire-place built of clay and stones; the inevitable sack of flour, half sack of potatoes and junk of pork; the old clothes and old boots, and a few books and newspapers; go far in making out the extent of the miner's worldly possessions. A little patch of cultivated ground enclosed by old "sluice-box" lumber, is sometimes an accompaniment, as well as a dog, a cat, or a few fowls. The inhabitant of this cabin is often rough, grey, and grizzly. He came out twenty years ago, and his residence has, with few exceptions, always been on the gulch where we now find him. Probably it rejoices in the euphonious name of Horse-beef Bar, Bull Dog Point, Jackass Gulch, or Ground Hogs Glory; by these names it may or may not be found on the surveyor-general's map, but at all events it goes by no other. He "does his trading," at a store at Diggerburgh. Credit he calls "jaw-bone," and talks about "running his face" for "grub," but sometimes this is objected to by the storekeeper, as the gulch is not "paying" well, and behind the counter you may see a mule's "jaw-bone" significantly suspended, and below the words "played out!" Here, the honest miner purchases a few pounds of flour, a little tea, coffee, and brown sugar, and as much as he can buy of whisky.

He can tell where all the rich spots have been in the rivers, bars, gulches, and flats; but that was in the glorious, wicked, cutting, shouting, fortune-making, times of yore. He can't tell where there are any rich spots now. He is certain there is a rich quartz ledge in the mountain yonder, and, if he could get water on the flat, he is sure it would pay good wages. Excess of fortune spoiled him in 'forty-nine. Economy is a myth with him, and he cheerfully entertains half a dozen friends, though his magazine of provisions, as well as of money, be in an advanced state of exhaustion. His supper cooked, he thinks of home—that is, the home of twenty years ago. In reality he has no home. Mentally, he sees the faces of his youth, fresh and blooming; but they are getting old and withered now. He sees the peach orchard and the farm-house, from which he wandered, a young rover, when first the news of golden California burst upon the astonished ears of the world. That home is now in the hands of strangers. Were he to "go East," as he calls it, he would find himself a stranger in a strange land. He thinks he'll go back "some time or other." Fortune occasionally favours him a trifle more than usual; and then he may make a trip to "the Bay," as he calls San

Francisco. He stops at the "What Cheer House." He may be seen there by hundreds. Poor fellow! He came here to enjoy himself, but he doesn't well know how. The novelty of the city wears off in a day or two. Without occupation, his routine of life broken, he becomes a victim to a disease for which the French could alone have invented a name—ennui. At night he can go to the theatre; but by day he sits in rows in the hall of the hotel, crowds the entrance, and sometimes blocks up the street. If he have money enough, and be so inclined, he may "go on the splurge," and possibly get drunk; but that with this class of miner is not very likely. His face wears an expression of wild bewilderment and intense weariness. Unaccustomed to the hurry and bustle of the city, he collides frequently with the denizens of the metropolis. The spruce, fashionably-dressed, frizzle-headed clerks, who flit by, excite in him feelings of contempt and indignation. The swarms of youthful females in the streets astonish, delight, and tantalise him. It is something so new to him. There are few on Jackass Gulch, and they would be better away. When he knew "Frisco," it was not much more than a collection of cotton tents on some sand-hills. Now, it is a fine city of one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. Females were almost unknown, and the announcement by a steamboat proprietor of "four lady passengers to-night" was quite enough to ensure a crowded patronage for his vessel. But the digger of the auriferous soil often leaves the city with the knowledge that the world has gone far ahead of him during his lonely residence in the mountains. He had far better not have come. In Digger-burgh he is somebody. In San Francisco he is lost among the crowd, or at best is only a "rusty old miner;" those who thus contemptuously talk of him, forgetting that he and such as he were the founders, and are yet, to a great extent, the stronghold, of California.

I fancy I do not really wrong the honest miner in saying he does not possess much religion. Yet, if a clergyman by any chance come into his camp, he makes a point of attending "meeting," on much the same principle, and with feelings of about equal reverence, with which he would go to a dog-fight or a tight-rope performance: because he looks upon it as the right thing to *patronise* the affair. If the parson look on as he is washing for gold, he will ask him if he would like to "wash out a pan," and as this invitation is usually accepted, the worthy fellow will contrive to slip in among the gravel, a tolerable nugget, so that the washer may be nothing the worse for his clerical visit: custom in such cases providing that the contents of the pan go to the visitor. At one time there was a "revival of religion" among the miners. Never was there such a demand for tracts. Indeed, so great was the demand, that a special appeal had to be issued by a certain religious body, whose mission it was to look after such matters, for increased contributions to the

"dear gold-diggers' tract fund." To use the words of the "appeal," "the cry comes o'er the western wave, *more tracts, more tracts!*" At last the painful truth oozed out (though I hardly think it was related at the May meetings) *that the miners used the tracts to paper their log shanties!* A friend of mine, whose lot it was to officiate as a clergyman among them at one time, used often to tell me that he had to ring a bell in the morning, all through the apology for a street, inviting his parishioners to divine worship, and that, finding nobody in church when he came in, he first looked into one gambling saloon or tavern, and then into another, inviting those assembled there to come to church. "All right, parson," would be the good-natured reply; "we'll be there as soon as we've played out this hand for the whiskies. Jest be goen' ahead with the prayers and things, and we'll be along for the preachin'!"

This taking of "drinks" is characteristic of the miner. No bargain can be made, or any other matter of business or sociality settled, without the indispensable drinks. The same clerical friend, whose experience I have just related, was shocked on his first arrival among the miners at being asked to "stand drinks," after he had received a very liberal subscription towards the building of his church. Two mining companies that I know something about, threw dice to determine which of them should treat the "whole creek" to champagne, and as that wine was sold at fifteen dollars per bottle, the cost to the loser may be guessed. In most mining localities it is looked upon as a cause of mortal offence, to decline drinking with the first fellow who shouts, "Let's put in a blast, colonel!" In some places it is quite a serious breach of etiquette not to ask all who are sitting round in the bar-room of a tavern, though total strangers, to "Step up and take a drink." Sometimes they do not require any invitation. A friend of mine having had a long ride one day, dismounted at a tavern to take, *more Americano*, some refreshment, when, to his utter astonishment, fourteen men who were sitting around stepped up, and "lowed they would take sugar in thar'n." He paid for the fifteen "drinks," as it was in strict accordance with the custom of the country; but he took care not to go back to that hostelry again.

The Australian gold-digger is in many respects different from the Californian, but still he evinces the same carelessness of money. It used to be the custom for these men to come down to some village after they had made a slight "pile," go each to his favourite public-house, and give the money into the landlord's hands, with the information that he "shouted" (or asked all and sundry to drink) until it was finished. Then the landlord at intervals would say, "Step up, boys, it's Jim Jenkins's shout!" Then they all wished Jim luck, until Jim's shout was out, and then he went back to his gully, proud that he had "spent his money like a man." On one occasion a miner came down and handed his money over to the landlord; but, contrary

to expectation, nobody would respond to his shout. He had been a convict, and "lagged" for some grievous offence. The man was at his wit's end. At last he struck upon the brilliant expedient of engaging an idler at labourer's daily wages—eight shillings—to *drink with him*. And so he got through his holiday!

No one can tell where a rich mine will be discovered, or where it will not. Even quartz mines, which require skill to diagnose, have been equally discovered by chance. A robber fired at a man standing with his back to a rock, but missed; as the ball splintered the moss-grown quartz, the miner who was attacked saw specks of gold sparkle in the moonlight. It afterwards proved one of the richest mines in California. Two miners about to leave the country, just to celebrate the event, got "on the spludge" the night before their intended departure. As they were coming home to their cabins, in mere foolishness they commenced rolling stones down a slope. One of these struck off the point of a rock: which, on being examined, was found rich with specks of gold. This changed their plans, and they stayed, and stayed to some purpose, for they afterwards became very wealthy men.

The honest miner is far from being what may be called a "domestic character." If he were making five dollars per diem to "the hand" at "Greaser's Camp," and heard that somebody was making six at "Hellgate Cañon," in "Mountain Goat Gulch," the chances are that he would presently disappear to the new El Dorado. Now, Gold Bluff was the point to which all were rushing; that failed, but it didn't dishearten the men. They next rushed in thousands to Gold Lake; and then the cry was Fraser River; which disappointed so many thousands, that eventually it became a matter of as serious personal offence to ask a gentleman if he had been to Fraser River, as to tell him to "Go to Jericho." In 1863, the infuriated miner was blocking all the mountain trails and Washoe was the cry. In 1864, it was Black-foot. In 1866, I saw hundreds rushing through slush and snow for Big Bend, in the heart of the Rocky Mountains, declaring that "Cariboo wasn't a patch on it," and that at all events they would "see the elephant." It is curious that men who have been on the Pacific coast since the commencement of gold mining, who have knocked about the Rocky Mountain slopes, and have been the victims of a dozen disappointments, should be so easily tempted again to risk fortune; but it is so, and the country would never have been what it is, if they had all been as sensible as they might have been. This vagabond propensity will fasten on a man who allows himself to sit in front of a frying pan and a bundle of blankets on the ridge pole of a sore-backed horse, and I verily believe there are many men who, if their history were known, have travelled more and endured greater hardship in this way than many whose names are famous in the annals of travel, and whom the Geographical Society delights to honour. The true seeker after

El Dorado does not stop at distance or difficulties.

The Pacific-coast gold-miner does not care to be called like the Australian, a "digger:" the term in the former region being applied to and associated with, a miserable race of Indians who inhabit the mountains. He likes to be called by the title I have put at the head of this paper, "The Honest Miner." That he is honest enough, as honesty goes in America, nobody will deny to the profession as a whole, but still there is occasionally the dishonest miner. We do not speak of the rascal who is caught stealing gold out of the "sluice-box," and gets lynched for his pains; but of the equally rascally individual who "salts" a claim before selling it. That is, he scatters a few pieces through the gravel before the buyer comes to test it. In California some of the claims are wrought summer and winter; indeed the winter is more favourable than the summer, because water is more plentiful; but in British Columbia and in the Rocky Mountains, the frost causes working to be suspended. Then the claims are "laid over" and the great body of the miners come down to Victoria and other towns to pass the winter months, and to spend the money they have made during the summer. They also try to dispose of rather doubtful claims at this time, and one of the means adopted is to report having "struck a good prospect" just before leaving. It is remarkable, to say the least of it, how many good prospects are "struck" in this way. The endless swindles connected with quartz companies are, I dare say, vividly enough in the memory of certain gentlemen in the City of London and elsewhere, whose purses were longer than their foresight.

Gold mining will always be a staple industry of the Rocky Mountain slope, and the increased immigration and attention excited by the Pacific Railroad will greatly increase the business; but the old miner will be "killed off." Large companies will work his "claims," and shoals of new hands will crowd his solitary valleys—men who know not the old traditions and have no sympathy with the old manners. He himself will meet them half-way, and will unconsciously lose many of his characteristics and peculiarities. He will get toned down to the duller routine of other workmen, as his pursuit takes its place among the "industries."

THE DEATH OF TH' OWD SQUIRE.

'Twas a wild, mad kind of night, as black as the bottomless pit,
The wind was howling away, like a Bedlamite in a fit,
Tearing the ash-boughs off, and mowing the poplars down,
In the meadows beyond the old flour-mill, where you turn off to the town.
And the rain (well, it *did* rain) dashing the window glass,
And deluging on the roof, as the Devil were come to pass;
The gutters were running in floods outside the stable-door,
And the spouts splashed from the tiles, as if they would never give o'er.

Lor' how the winders rattled! you'd almost ha thought that thieves
Were wrenching at the shutters, while a ceaseless pelt of leaves
Flew at the door in gusts; and I could hear the beek
Calling so loud I knew at once it was up to a tall man's neck.

We was huddling in the harness-room, by a little scrap of fire,
And Tom, the coachman he was there, a practising for the choir;
But it sounded dismal, anthem did, for squire was dying fast,
And the doctor'd said, do what he would, "Squire's breaking up at last."

The Death watch, sure enough, ticked loud just over th' owd mare's head,
Though he had never once been heard up there since master's boy lay dead;
And the only sound, besides Tom's toon, was the stirring in the stalls,
And the gnawing and the scratching of the rats in the owd walls.

We couldn't hear Death's foot pass by, but we knew that he was near;
And the chill rain, and the wind and cold made us all shake with fear;
We listened to the clock upstairs, 'twas breathing soft and low,
For the nurse said at the turn of night the old squire's soul would go.

Master had been a wildish man, and led a roughish life;
Didn't he shoot the Bowton squire, who dared write to his wife?
He beat the Rads at Hindon town, I heard, in 'twenty-nine,
When every pail in market place was brimmed with red port wine.

And as for hunting, bless your soul, why for forty year or more
He'd kept the Marley hounds, man, as his fayther did afore;
And now to die, and in his bed—the season just begun—
It made him fret, the doctor said, as 't might do any-one.

And when the young sharp lawyer came to see him sign his will,
Squire made me blow my horn outside as we were going to kill;
And we turned the hounds out in the court—that seemed to do him good;
For he swore, and sent us off to seek a fox in Thornhill wood.

But then the fever it rose high, and he would go see the room
Where missus died ten years ago when Lammastide shall come;
I mind the year, because our mare at Salisbury broke down;
Moreover the town hall was burnt at Steeple Dinton town.

It might be two, or half past two, the wind seemed quite asleep;
Tom, he was off, but I awake, sat watch and ward to keep;
The moon was up, quite glorious like, the rain no longer fell,
When all at once out clashed and clanged the rusty turret bell.

That hadn't been heard for twenty year, not since the Luddite days,
Tom he leaped up, and I leaped up, for all the house ablaze
Had sure not scared us half as much, and out we ran like mad;
I, Tom, and Joe, the whipper in, and t' little stable lad.

"He's killed himself," that's the idea that came into my head;
I felt as sure as though I saw Squire Barrowby was dead;
When all at once a door flew back, and he met us face to face;
His scarlet coat was on his back, and he looked like the old race.

The nurse was clinging to his knees, and crying like a child;
The maids were sobbing on the stairs, for he looked fierce and wild:
"Saddle me Lightning Bess, my man," that's what he said to me;
"The moon is up, we're sure to find at Stop or Etterby."

"Get out the dogs; I'm well to-night, and young again and sound;
I'll have a run once more before they put me underground;
They brought my father home feet first, and it never shall be said
That his son Joe, who, rode so straight, died quietly in his bed.

Brandy!" he cried; "a tumbler full, you women howling there;"
Then clapped the old black velvet cap upon his long grey hair,
Thrust on his boots, snatched down his whip; though he was old and weak,
There was a devil in his eye, that would not let me speak.

We loosed the dogs to humour him, and sounded on the horn;
The moon was up above the woods, just east of Haggard Bourne;
I buckled Lightning's throat lash fast; the squire was watching me;
He let the stirrups down himself, so quick, yet carefully.

Then up he got and spurred the mare, and, ere I well could mount,
He drove the yard gate open, man, and called to old Dick Blount,
Our huntsman, dead five years ago—for the fever rose again,
And was spreading, like a flood of flame, fast up into his brain.

Then off he flew before the dogs, yelling to call us on,
While we stood there, all pale and dumb, scarce knowing he was gone;
We mounted, and below the hill we saw the fox break out,
And down the covert ride we heard the old squire's parting shout.

And in the moonlit meadow mist we saw him fly the rail
Beyond the hurdles by the beck, just half way down the vale;
I saw him breast fence after fence—nothing could turn him back;
And in the moonlight after him streamed out the brave old pack.

'Twas like a dream, Tom cried to me, as we rode free and fast;
Hoping to turn him at the brook, that could not well be past,
For it was swollen with the rain; but, Lord, 'twas not to be;
Nothing could stop old Lightning Bess but the broad breast of the sea.

The hounds swept on, and well in front the mare had got her stride;
She broke across the fallow land that runs by the down side;

We pulled up on Chalk Linton Hill, and as we stood us there,
Two fields beyond we saw the squire fall stone dead from the mare.

Then she swept on, and, in full cry, the hounds went out of sight;

A cloud came over the broad moon, and something dimmed our sight,

As Tom and I bore master home, both speaking under breath;

And that's the way I saw th' owd squire ride boldly to his death.

HINDOO CIVIL SERVANTS.

A MISTAKE has been made lately by the Civil Service Commissioners which is not the less grave for being the mistake of able men, who, on the whole, discharge arduous duties very efficiently. The mistake is that the commissioners have sacrificed to an official crotchet, two out of four Hindoo candidates who, at the recent open competition for the Civil Service of India, earned fairly their right to serve the Queen. Two of these four Hindoos, who won good places among the selected fifty out of three hundred and twenty-three candidates for public office in India, were civilly strangled before the altar of the said crotchet; and a third, upon the same grounds, was scarified with a reservation that might set a lasting mark upon his character. Before we tell how this was done, let us show what is meant by open competition for the Civil Service of India.

Before the year eighteen 'thirty-four no native of India could hold, under the British government of India, any high employment in the public service. But in that year an Act was passed ordaining "that no native of British India, or natural-born subject of His Majesty, should by reason of his religion, place of birth, descent or colour, be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the said company." And when all imperial rights of the East India Company were resumed by the Crown, it was emphatically declared to be Her Majesty's will "that so far as may be, our subjects of whatever creed or race be fairly and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability, and integrity duly to discharge." We come now to the means taken for testing these qualifications.

Before the year eighteen hundred and fifty-three, offices in India were obtained by private interest with the East India Directors. But the old system was succeeded in that year by the annual distribu-

tion of appointments in the Indian Civil Service among the best men in open competitive examination. The scheme of the examinations was devised by a committee which had Lord Macaulay for its chairman. The plan of this committee was meant to ensure the fair testing, not of one particular form, but of any form, of good education. It assigned to each of twelve branches of knowledge, a certain number of marks, and allowed candidates to offer themselves for examination in as many or as few of the twelve as they pleased. It did not enforce knowledge of Latin and Greek. A youth trained upon Latin, Greek, and Mathematics, might get to the head of the list with knowledge of that sort; but another might get to the head of the list with scarcely any knowledge of Mathematics, little Latin, and no Greek, by passing a good examination, say, in English, French, Italian, German, Geology, and Chemistry. In the scale of marks no value was given to the vernacular languages of India, which were to be studied at a later stage; but there was recognition of the two great classical languages of the East, Sanskrit and Arabic. "These two languages," said the report of the committee, "are already studied by a few young men at the great English seats of learning. They can be learned as well here as in the East; and they are not likely to be studied in the East unless some attention has been paid to them here." To the native of India they are very much what Latin and Greek are to the Englishman. In the year 'fifty-three, the Indian Universities were not established; and there was practically no expectation of a native candidate from India. But, for the recognition of Sanskrit and Arabic studies in England, there were allowed to each of those subjects three hundred and seventy-five marks in a scale which gave seven hundred and fifty to Greek or Latin. The examinations thus established were conducted by the India Board till the year 'fifty-eight, when the control of them was made over by Lord Ellenborough to the Civil Service Commissioners. In the preceding year, during the mutiny, the University of Calcutta had been established.

The Universities of Bombay and Calcutta belong to a plan devised by the East India Company before its extinction by the Sepoy Mutiny of eighteen 'fifty-seven. A despatch of the Court of Directors, prepared in the year 'fifty-four under the direction of Sir Charles Wood, laid down a

plan for the spread of education in India, which left no form of it untouched, from university and college training to village schools. Universities were planned upon the model of the University of London; with due allowance for the different conditions and requirements of the students. Professorships of science were established, with special recognition of proficiency in the vernacular languages, as well as in Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian. Schools for the education of the natives throughout India were encouraged by grants in aid, without distinction of creed. At Calcutta, besides an excellent Medical College, there is the Hindoo College, founded by Ramuhan Roy and Mr. David Hare: which, on the establishment of the university, was split into a Hindoo school and a college known as Presidency College. There is Doveton College, originating in a school founded by Anglo-Indians for the education of their children, to which a college was added after the munificent bequest to it, about twelve years ago, of twenty thousand pounds from Major Doveton. There is a Mahometan College founded by Warren Hastings, for the study of oriental literature, to which a general department was added, upon the foundation of the university; also a Sanskrit College founded by Horace Hayman Wilson, which has been extended in like manner. Besides these, Calcutta has a Free Church College founded by the liberal and able Scotch missionary, Dr. Alexander Duff; a Cathedral Mission College; and a General Assembly Institution, to which a college department has been lately added. At Bombay, where the university began to grant degrees in the year 'sixty-two, there is the Elphinstone Institution, originating in a subscription to do honour to Mr. Elphinstone, at the close of his government, in 'twenty-six. There is also a Grant College, founded in memory of Sir Robert Grant, after his death in 'thirty-seven. It is a well-appointed medical school, recognised by our Royal College of Surgeons, and has near it a hospital founded by the munificent gift of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, whose benefactions to Bombay during twenty years amounted to two hundred thousand pounds. Among other examples of the liberal aid given by native gentlemen to the advance of education, is the founding of a travelling fellowship for Hindoos in the Bombay University, by Mr. Premchund Roychund, who has also endowed a Professorship of Economic Science, and provided funds for

building the Civil Engineering College at Poona.

It may be noted, that under the Indian Council Act—a supplement to the legislation of 'fifty-eight for the better government of India, which became law in 'sixty-one—natives of high mark have been invited to take part in the deliberations of the Viceroy's Council. The bench and the bar of India have been open to natives since the establishment of the High Court at Calcutta and the introduction of the circuit system; measures which had an earnest and accomplished advocate in Mr. Henry Sumner Maine. In this Court, for the first time, natives might be admitted to the bench, judge causes of Europeans, both in civil and criminal cases, and be paid as well as their English brother judges. Of the Hindoos who came to London, several have entered as students of the Inns of Court without offering themselves for the Civil Service; and to some of those who offer for the Civil Service, eating terms and law studies have supplied a second chance of a career. For the Covenanted Civil Service has been nominally open, practically closed; and too many of the lower class Eurasians, instead of supporting the liberal policy adopted by their country, desire nothing better than a happy maintenance of the old, exclusive state of things.

One of the first acts of the Civil Service Commissioners in connexion with the open examinations for the Civil Service of India, when they passed under their control, was to raise from three hundred and seventy-five to five hundred, the number of marks assigned for the Sanskrit or Arabic languages and literature. The reason given for the change was, that "without departing from the principle of not requiring in the first examination acquaintance with special branches of knowledge, the commissioners consider that such knowledge, when it is admitted, should be adequately rewarded." The two Civil Service Commissioners of that year, 'fifty-eight—one of whom, Sir John Shaw Lefevre, had been a member of the original committee which settled the plan of competition for the Indian Civil Service—recognised at once and generously, the probable effect of the establishment of the Calcutta University. "Although," they said in their report, "this important institution is too recent to have produced any results, yet, looking to the curricula which have been established, the curricula for its degrees, to the exa-

mination papers which have been set, and to the numerous native students which it has already attracted, we cannot doubt that it will afford sufficient opportunities of a sound education to enable those who receive it to compete successfully with the young men of this country in the examinations for the Civil Service of India." In the same report it was said: "They will undoubtedly be at some disadvantage as compared with natives of the United Kingdom in respect of the ordinary subjects of classical education; but this will be, in part, compensated by the greater facilities they possess as regards Sanskrit and Arabic."

In the following year, there was the first arrival from India. A Parsee came over to compete: the limit of age for competitors being then twenty-three, and he in his twenty-third year. While he was working in London for examination, the limit of age was reduced to twenty-two, and he became disqualified. It was not until the year eighteen hundred and sixty-three that the first of the expected Hindoo candidates appeared in the examination-room, in the persons of Mr. Satyendra Nath Tagore and Mr. Manomohan Ghose. In that year there were a hundred and eighty-nine competitors. Mr. Tagore offered himself for examination in six subjects—English literature and history, English composition, French, moral science, Sanskrit and Arabic—got the highest marks of his year in Sanskrit and Arabic, passed a fair examination in his four other subjects, and came out forty-third of the selected fifty. The place of the other Hindoo candidate was outside the border line of the selected. Mr. Tagore was thus the first, and for the next six years—in fact, until last June—he was the only native Indian who won his way into the Indian Civil Service by success in open competition. He won it in June, 'sixty-three, and he did so because he could add to a competent knowledge of four other subjects, a very good knowledge of Sanskrit and Arabic. In October of the same year, the number of marks obtainable by Sanskrit was reduced from five hundred to three hundred and seventy-five!

In eighteen 'sixty-four there was a general raising of the required minimum of knowledge.

Mr. Ghose tried again once or twice and failed, and then in 'sixty-five, the limit of age was again reduced by a year, and became—as it now is—twenty-one. This, of

course, put another difficulty in the way of native Indian candidates; who have special difficulties to overcome, in conquest of domestic prejudices, before they can, at great cost to themselves or their families, come four thousand miles to the place of examination, and there compete in a foreign language with men born to it. No wonder that a native Indian paper wrote, in January, 'sixty-six: "The impression is gaining ground amongst the people of India that the Civil Service examination is a delusion; that the Queen's proclamation is destined to remain a dead letter; and that it is useless to send to England Indian youths at enormous expense and trouble, for the chances of their success are remote."

No more Indian candidates appeared. Mr. Tagore was still the only Hindoo who had passed.

This was the state of affairs when there appeared, a few weeks ago, the list of fifty candidates selected from among three hundred and twenty-three for the Indian Civil Service, in the open competition of June, eighteen 'sixty-nine. There appeared in it not merely the name of, at last, another Hindoo, but the names of four Hindoos, who, moreover, all stood in good places among the fifty, and one of whom had the distinguished position of third in the list. It fortunately happens that this gentleman, Mr. Romesh Chunder Dutt, is not open to the technical objection brought against the other three, and adopted, by misjudgment of the commissioners, for the discrediting of one and the exclusion of two from the places they so hardly and well earned.

Of the four Hindoos who took rank among the selected candidates at the last open competition for the Indian Civil Service, three are from Calcutta, one is from Bombay. The three from Calcutta are Messrs. Dutt, Gupta, and Banerjee: who passed third, fourteenth, and thirty-eighth in the list of the selected fifty. The one from Bombay, is Mr. Thakur, who passed thirty-ninth. Messrs. Dutt and Gupta, before they came to England, had been studying for three years at Presidency College, and had passed their first examination in arts at the Calcutta University. Mr. Banerjee had studied for four years at Doveton College, and was B.A. of the Calcutta University. These gentlemen reached England in April, 'sixty-eight, entered themselves at once to classes in University College, London, and worked hard during vacation with those professors and teachers who had time to spare for them. Wherever

they became known, they made friends. They came to this country well educated, were liberal of mind, most friendly to England, amiable, upright, and indefatigably hard-working men, in character and general attainment answering to the best class of English students. They worked steadily for at least twelve, usually fourteen, fifteen, sixteen hours a day, as men well might who had staked so much as they were staking on success in the required examination. It was against their coming that they must break caste, oppose religious prejudices of their friends, cut themselves off in many things from their own people, travel four thousand miles, and maintain themselves alone in a strange country, for the chance—which experience declared to be a bad chance—of beating two or three hundred Englishmen on their own ground in their own subjects of study.

Mr. Thakur, who is of a high caste Brahmin family, came from Bombay, where, after education at Elphinstone College, he had taken the degree of B.A. in his university. He arrived in England only about five months before the examination, and did not connect himself with any English college. We have heard less of his story than of the others, and only assume its general resemblance to that of the three Hindoos from Calcutta.

All these gentlemen had fulfilled every requirement of the law. Each had deposited exact evidence of his age with the commissioners, passed his examination, received formal notification of the place obtained among selected candidates, and seen it announced in the newspapers, when the difficulty was first raised which disturbed the official judgment. Justice was then tied hand and foot, and lies now in some danger of being strangled with red tape. One evening during their period of study in London, these Hindoos, being in friendly talk with fellow-countrymen (one of whom, settled in London as a teacher of his language to selected candidates, we will call Mr. Blank), were discussing what chance any of them had of offering himself for a second examination if he were rejected at the first. But, said Mr. Blank to two of them, you were entered as sixteen when you matriculated at Calcutta, and by that reckoning you would already be over twenty-one.

Now the university of Calcutta requires that a student upon matriculating should have, "to the best of his belief, attained the age of sixteen years." The university of Bombay requires that he shall have

"completed his sixteenth year." The university of Madras sets no limit of age; and at the two other universities there is good evidence to show that there has been much looseness of practice in registering the age of students at their entrance. It is the known and legal custom of a Hindoo to reckon age by the true year of his life, or that which he will complete on his next birthday. This custom is accepted in the Indian law courts; it was fully argued and admitted, years ago, in the case of a conversion of a Hindoo boy by a missionary; and the best evidence of its common acceptance is the rule that a Hindoo is of age when sixteen: which, in the chief text book of native law, Macnaghten's Principles, is rightly laid down as meaning that, "according to the doctrine of Bengal, the end of fifteen years is the limit of minority." This is, indeed, a custom beyond question.

Mr. Chisholm Anstey, who has been a judge in the Bombay High Court, adds to a statement of it, that, "according to his judgment and belief, no native of British India, upon whom the condition of attaining a certain age is imposed by law would, unless the sense thereof were previously explained to him, understand it to be a condition of having completed such age." The reader will observe that we are now coming to the mistake made by the commissioners. Misled by a reference to the Indian University Calendars, they assumed against two of these Hindoos that their age exceeded twenty-one on the first of March last. Take one as an example. Mr. Banerjee duly deposited with the commissioners, before his examination, the required evidence of the exact date of his birth: which was the tenth of November, eighteen 'forty-eight. This evidence having been accepted as sufficient, he was duly admitted to examination, and in every respect had fulfilled his part in the conditional contract by which he was tempted to leave home four thousand miles behind him. After this, in fact, the commissioners had nothing to do with the books of the Calcutta University. But grant that they had, the source of the misunderstanding was most clear. That any question could arise out of it, did not occur to the young Hindoos until they heard it first raised by their countryman, Mr. Blank, who had been for some time in England. They proposed at once to take steps to avoid future misunderstanding. But Mr. Blank, as they afterwards explained to the commissioners, and had witnesses to prove, "told us very emphatically that it would be

absurd to do so, as it would be suggesting difficulties where none existed, and that if any one had his attention drawn to the matter it was easy enough to explain it." After his countrymen had passed, Mr. Blank, for reasons best known to himself, informed against them. When called upon to explain, they did explain. But the decision of the commissioners is told in these sentences from their subsequent petition for its reconsideration, showing "that they forwarded to the commissioners the explanations asked of them, and offered to procure from India further corroboration of the fact that they had in respect of age at the time of examination strictly and faithfully fulfilled the conditions required of candidates in the open competition for the Civil Service of India. That four days after their explanation had been forwarded they received letters from the secretary to the commission, informing them that the Civil Service Commissioners had carefully considered their reply, and that they removed their names from the list of selected candidates because they regarded the statement of age made by them on matriculation as 'formal and authentic evidence.' Therefore they did not so regard the affidavits sworn by the fathers of their petitioners, supported in the case of one of them by the certificate of the Honourable Dwarkanath Mitter, a judge of the High Court of Calcutta, and in the case of the other by the original of his horoscope, with his father's solemn affirmation of its genuineness."

They argued modestly in their memorial that the exact and legal evidence as to their age was not rebutted by the entries made at their matriculation in the Universities of Calcutta and Bombay, because those entries included no sworn evidence; were never designed as exact evidence of age; and, moreover, according to the custom among Hindoos, and, in the case of the Calcutta University, according to the ordinary meaning of words in the English language, they were, and are, true, and also not inconsistent with the declarations of age made before the commissioners in the more precise form then required.

Mr. Banerjea matriculated in the University of Calcutta in December, 1863. Upon matriculation he was asked his age by the Principal of the Doveton College, who was filling up a form of particulars. He replied, "Sixteen," following the universal custom of his country. He had never read, or been required to read, the Calendar of the University, or seen any

part of it in print or in writing. No part of it was read or explained to him at the time when he stated his age, nor was any intimation given to him, that by stating his age to be sixteen he would be understood to say that he had completed his sixteenth year. Again, this statement of age at matriculation was made by himself only, and no corroborative document was required of, or put in by, any relative or friend on his behalf; and upon this statement of his own was founded a certificate by the Principal of Doveton College, to the effect that Surendra Nath Banerjea had, "to the best of his belief, attained the age of sixteen years." The certificate was probably signed with a mistaken belief that the boy had completed the age of sixteen, Doveton College being attended chiefly by students who are not Hindoos. But according to the custom of his country, and according also to what happened to be the meaning of the words of the certificate, he answered truly, although he had only attained or entered upon it. For the word "attained" is defined in Johnson's Dictionary to mean, in the only connexion in which it could be applied to a period of time, "to come up to, to enter upon;" meaning, according to its etymology, to touch upon, and even, as Professor Key has shown in a page of a volume of philosophical essays published last year, "*only just to touch upon.*" Therefore, neither technically nor equitably, was there at that time supplied to the Civil Service Commissioners "the formal and authentic evidence" that Mr. Banerjea had, in December, 1863, completed his sixteenth year, which is held to supersede the precise and legally attested evidence which had been laid before the commissioners in due and exact accord with their requirements.

The case is one that should not have needed argument. The commissioners made short work of it by determining that they would not hear argument. They would accept nothing but a boy's loose statement of age, not made to them, made without caution, and in accordance with the custom of his country; to this they would give a false interpretation, and this, so interpreted—this evidence not properly before them—they would affirm to be "formal and authentic evidence." In favour of this, they resolved to exclude all the exact evidence of horoscope (which is, for an Indian, legally equivalent to our certificate of birth), and sworn testimony which had been produced before them, and accepted

by them, and which the victims of their mistake declared that they were able to corroborate by further testimony. One of the two gentlemen rejected, Mr. Thakur, would have been under the required limit of age by either reckoning; either by the books of his university or by the more exact evidence deposited with the commissioners. But by assuming the year of his birth from one statement and the month from another, he could be excluded. That was done, and he also was rejected. One of the three gentlemen whose evidence of age was questioned would have been still under twenty-one by any way of calculation. To him, therefore, the secretary to the commissioners wrote: "The discrepancy is important as affecting your character, it being obvious that a motive for understating your age on the later of the two occasions may have existed in the wish to be able to compete again in 1870, if unsuccessful in 1869. Having carefully considered all the circumstances of the case, the commissioners now desire to acquaint you that they do not think there is sufficient ground for regarding you as disqualified in respect of character for the Civil Service of India, and that your name will therefore remain on the list of selected candidates."

One need not say how this ungracious acceptance was felt by a young man who is not only high-minded and accomplished, but modest and keenly sensitive. One thing, however, is clear from it. The monstrous blunder of the commissioners is not only conspicuous for size, but is also well defined. The native candidates who are deprived, for the present, of the prize they have honestly won, are not excluded on the ground of character. The case is limited to the simple question of fact: How old are they? Nobody, we believe, doubts that the true date of birth was given to the commissioners, and that the apparent error is accounted for by the loose usage, on a point in itself not so material as to induce much strictness, at the Indian universities. There are several gentlemen now in England who have been connected with the Indian universities: two of them, indeed, as registrars. But their evidence as to that looseness of usage was offered in vain to the commissioners. The commissioners had spoken, and the commissioners are supreme. To be sure they had not spoken wisely, but what will supremacy come to next, if it begin by coming to confession? Their mistake is manifest to every one outside their office; to members

of the Indian government; to old Indian authorities; and to the judges of the Court of Queen's Bench. No matter. The commissioners are almost irresponsible. They are beyond the reach of the Council for India; and a court of law has only a limited though, in this case let us hope, sufficient power over their decisions. When they refused to receive any evidence, or to consider anything, and, in reply to Mr. Banerjee's statement clearly showing that he was within the prescribed age, wrote back that he had "admitted" he was beyond it, the only hope left to the young man was appeal to English justice. The facts of the case, with the documents relating to it, were brought before the Court of Queen's Bench, on the last day but one of last term: when motion was made on the part of one of the rejected Hindoos for a mandamus to the Civil Service Commissioners to hear and receive evidence on the matter. Four judges were on the bench, and their opinions of the course taken by the commissioners are thus reported in the *Times* of the twelfth of June:

"The Lord Chief Justice: They say in effect, 'Any evidence you may adduce, we shall set at nought.'

"Mr. Justice Mellor: They say, 'You are estopped by your statement at Calcutta,' though it plainly appears that it is quite consistent with his present statement.

"Mr. Justice Blackburn: They totally misapprehend his statement, and then they tell the applicant that upon their mistaken construction of it, they consider it conclusive against him, whereas in reality it is not so.

"Mr. Justice Hannen: They appear to represent it as imperative upon them to take the eastern mode of computation.

"The Lord Chief Justice: Show us that we have jurisdiction, and I think there is no doubt we shall exercise it."

The mandamus accordingly was issued, but the following day was the last day of term, and the case cannot be heard until November. Are the commissioners now waiting to be just under compulsion, or do they hold that even the Queen's Bench cannot force their will? The power of the judges over them is, we believe, paralleled by a man's power of taking a horse to the water, but not being able to make him drink. The commissioners may say, "Well, you are for convincing us against our will. Produce the evidence you bind us to receive. And now, having considered what

you tell us to consider, we are of the same opinion still." The very fact that they are beyond all doubt men of high and honourable character, may make it less easy for them to yield. They feel how conscientiously, and even with a wish to deal justly, and—as far as, in law, was possible to them—even generously, by India, they arrived at their original decision. Knowledge of this may make them only the more tenacious of it, when all the world cries out upon it as a blunder. Here seems to be a new example of an old experience, that sometimes the most ingenious and monstrous blunders are those of the ablest and most conscientious men.

AS THE CROW FLIES.

DUE SOUTH.—DORKING AND WOTTON.

ONE dart from the road the crow makes between Norbury Park and Dorking, to visit Westhumble, "Camilla Lacy," the house built by Mr. Locke for his friend General D'Arbly. To this pleasant retreat "Little Fanny D'Arbly" came when she gave the general her hand, and here she wrote Camilla, one of her most successful novels, drawing some of her characters from the family of Mr. Locke. Madame D'Arbly wrote Camilla, or a Picture of Youth—for which she received three thousand pounds—in 1795, two years after her marriage, and the year her tragedy of Edwy and Elgiva failed at Drury Lane. The world may forget Miss Burney the novelist, but they will never forget the keeper of that admirable Diary, for, amid much silly toadyism and sentimental vanity, she has left us an extraordinary series of pictures of internal court life. It is the only book in which we really see the respectable old royal couple and their wild and selfish children drawn in detail.

Not far away over these hills is Polesden, among whose beech woods is the house where Sheridan retired during one of the lulls of his revelling life, just after his marriage with his second wife, Miss Ogle, a daughter of the Dean of Winchester. It was here in 1795, just after his famous reply on the Begum charge, and his four days' deluge of eloquence and invective, that this extraordinary meteor of a man expended twenty thousand pounds (Heaven and the Jews only knew where he got it). He was living here during the great debates on the mutiny at the Nore and the dreadful Irish Rebellion. A toothless old man is still living at Polesden, who, when young and curly-headed, was a foot-boy in Sheridan's house. He has preserved many traditions of those wild and reckless days. It was not unfrequent, says the old boy, for Sheridan to drive out with four horses, and before the first stage to have the leaders seized by an ambuscade of hook-nosed sheriff's officers. It was well known to the Dorking tradesmen that they

only had to toil up Rainmore Hill to Polesden, to be sure if they did not get their bill paid, to at least secure a box at Drury Lane for themselves and friends. If stories were true "Sherry" was not very scrupulous in his expedients for raising ready supplies, relying on his ultimate power of always obtaining money. On one occasion he sold a butcher a drove of hogs that he had allowed a friendly farmer to drive into his stubbles, and on another time when a choleric and refractory butcher refused to leave a juicy leg of mutton that had been ordered, without being first paid for it, Sherry sent a servant, while the joint was in the parlour for approval, to thrust it in the pot, and begin to sodden it, so as to checkmate the irascible tradesman when he asked for its return.

Not far from Polesden, is Ranmore Common, the breezy summit of a hill that commands Dorking, a wild undulating sweep of fox-haunted furze and brake with a twenty-five miles' range of landscape.

"Can you see St. Paul's from here?" asked a traveller of an old native breaking stones on this high plateau of Surrey down.

"Lor' bless your honour, yes," said the old man, pushing back the wire shade from his eyes; "and generally just before a shower—it's always going to be wet, master, when we see Saint Paul's, so we calls it hereabouts our weather-glass."

Thus time and distance dwarf objects. A king's reign forms a line in a chronicler's book of dynasties, and a huge cathedral becomes at a distance a countryman's weather-glass.

The Aladdin's Palace of a mansion that crowns this embowered hill, and rises like a fortress above Dorking, is Denbies, now Mr. Cubitt's, once Mr. Denison's, and originally built on the site of an obscure farm-house by Mr. Jonathan Tyers, that ingenious and eccentric gentleman who in 1730 bought Vauxhall, in the Borough, and opened a nightly Ridotto al fresco. An hypochondriac, like his son Tommy Tyers, who was an amateur poet, and a friend of Dr. Johnson's, the proprietor of the centre of fashion and folly turned the place into a sort of sentimental cemetery. One wood of eight acres he called "the Penseroso," and it was supposed to resemble the pleasantest side of the Valley of the Shadow of Death. There was a small temple with elegiac inscriptions, and a loud but concealed clock to break the intolerable "sound of nothing." A dismal alcove with paintings by roystering Hayman, of The Dying Christian and The Dying Unbeliever, and the stern statue of Truth trampling on a mask, had as a wind-up and final corrector, at the termination of a walk, two "elegantly carved pedestals" with two skulls. Beneath one, a lady's, was written:

Blush not, ye fair, to own me—but be wise,
Nor turn from sad mortality your eyes,

and so on, ending thus:

When coxcombs flatter, and when fools adore,
Here learn the lesson to be vain no more.

Beneath the gentleman's cranium was this poetical rap on the knuckles :

Why start? The case is yours—or will be soon,
Some years perhaps—perhaps another moon.
Life, &c. &c.

Farewell! remember! nor my words despise,
The only happy are the only wise.

All this sham asceticism of the proprietor of the Lambeth tea-gardens, was swept away by the next proprietor in 1767, and instead of dismal graves there are now broad sweeps of sunny lawn, and instead of ladies' and gentlemen's skulls, a scarlet blaze of geranium-beds and golden billows of calceolarias.

The crow drops from Ranmore Hill upon Dorking, which stands close to the old Roman road, or "stone street" leading from Arundel to the Sussex coast. There is one long street with an ugly church of the Georgian Gothic, lying back shyly behind the houses, as if ashamed of itself. The whole town is guarded by wooded hills.

The literary pilgrim looks in vain for his special throne—the Marquis of Granby. The famed house, where the fatal widow beguiled old Weller, and where the Shepherd, after imbibing too deeply of his special vanity, was cooled in the horse-trough, is gone. Let the pilgrim be informed that the real "Markis" was the King's Head (now the Post Office), a great coaching house on the Brighton road in the old days, and where many a smoking team drew up when Sammywell was young. Long before old Weller mounted his chariot throne Dorking was a quiet place, much frequented by London merchants (chiefly the Dutch) who came down to see Box Hill, and to eat fresh-caught perch. Here and there a gable end marks a house of this period, but the only history the town claims is that its church has the honour of containing the body of that fat Duke of Norfolk, who died in 1815, and who was famous for eating more beef steaks at a meal than any other Englishman living. This portly peer was the sworn boon companion of Fox and the Regent, and the daring man who, in 1798, consistently opposed war with revolutionary France, and was dismissed from the Lord-Lieutenancy of Yorkshire for having, at the Whig Club, toasted "the Majesty of the People." At Deepdene, that beautifully wooded estate, with hilly plantations rising above it in three dark green billows, "Anastatius" Hope resided, and collected his stores of Etruscan vases, ancient statues, and Thorwaldsen sculptures. At Deepdene Mr. Disraeli wrote *Coningsby*.

Through Deepdene Park, with its huge twisted Spanish chesnuts, and its defaced castle ruin, approached by a funereal triple avenue of limes, the crow skims to an unobtrusive cottage near Brockham Green, that many a midnight has echoed to the songs of that Bacchanalian veteran of the Regent's times, Captain Morris, to whom the fat Duke of Norfolk, after much pressure, gave this asylum for his old age. Under this quiet roof

the Regent has, perhaps, joined in the chorus of "Billy's too Young to drive Us," or "Billy Pitt and the Farmer." The captain not only won the gold cup from the Anacreontic Society for his song "Ad Poculum," but carried his poems through twenty-four editions, and was for years the choicest spirit of the Beef Steak Club, where he was always the chosen brewer of the punch. What a contrast, this quiet haven with noisy Offley's and the club revelries that never shook the Captain's iron constitution! He has been described as one night heartlessly reading a funeral service from the back window of Offley's that opened on Covent Garden churchyard, and pouring out as a swilling libation a crown bowl of punch on the grave of the original of Mr. Thackeray's Costigan, a poor, clever, worn-out sot, who had been recently buried there. If this was the fun of the Regency times, Heaven guard us from its revival under whatever Prince.

The crow cannot tear himself away en route for Southampton without one swoop on Wotton, close to Dorking, where John Evelyn was born. His life was uneventful; first, a traveller and student in Italy, then a secret correspondent of the Royalists, and after the Restoration one of the first and most active fellows of the Royal Society. After much public employment, and much patronage of all good and useful discoveries, Evelyn inherited Wotton, and was here in the great storm of 1703, when above a thousand trees were blown down in sight of the house. Evelyn was a great promoter of tree planting, and he particularly mentions, in his quiet, amiable way, so devoid of all self-assertion, that his grandfather had at Wotton timber standing worth one hundred thousand pounds. Of that timber in Evelyn's own lifetime thirty thousand pounds' worth had fallen by the axe or storm.

They show at Wotton an old beech table, six feet in diameter, which is probably as old as the days of "Silvy Evelyn;" but the oak table he himself mentions, five feet broad, nine feet long, and six inches thick, is gone. The worthy man, whose life was, as Horace Walpole says, "a course of inquiry, study, curiosity, instruction, and benevolence," has described his own house at Wotton, where he wished to found his ideal college, as "large and ancient, suitable to those hospitable times, and so sweetly environed with delicious streams and venerable woods as, in the judgment of strangers as well as Englishmen, it may be compared to one of the most pleasant seats in the nation, most tempting to a great person and a wanton purse, to render it conspicuous; it has rising grounds, meadows, woods, and water in abundance."

Skirting the woods Evelyn loved so well, the crow passes to Leith Hill. From the tower, under whose pavement the builder, Mr. Hull, an eccentric old barrister, who had known Pope and Bishop Berkeley, and who had lived for years close by, in learned retirement, was buried in 1772, the bird sees a region of moor and sandbank, the delight of Mr. Linnell and a

host of landscape painters. The eye has a radius of enjoyment here two hundred miles in circumference. Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire, Berkshire, Bucks, Herts, Middlesex, Kent, Essex, and Wiltshire are visible in miniature. That little misty spot of firs is Nettlebed, in Oxfordshire; that glimmer through a blue dimple of the horizon is the sea glittering through Shoreham Gap, a cleft in the South Downs, thirty miles distant.

The time to catch the glimpse of the sea is about eleven A.M. of a clear but not too hot a morning, when no mist rises from the intervening valleys. Then the sea sparkles for a moment or two as the sun passes Shoreham gap, and, with a glass, you can even catch a white glimpse of a passing sail.

One of the greatest finds ever made of Anglo-Saxon coins was in 1817, at Winterfield Farm, near Dorking. Seven hundred coins in a wooden box were turned up by the plough in a field near an old Roman road, not far from Hanstiebury camp, which is generally thought to have been Danish. The coins, caked together by coppery alloys, which had decomposed since the owner had buried them here with fear and doubt, were lying twelve inches below the surface, in a patch of dark earth, always observed to be specially fertile. There was money of many kings, but chiefly of Ethelwolf (265) and Ethelbert (249). It is supposed they were not buried here before 870, the year Athelstan began to reign. Mr. Barclay, of Bury Hill, a descendant of the Apologist for the Quakers, and of that Mr. David Barclay, the wealthy London merchant, who feasted three successive Georges at his house in Cheapside, bought most of this great find, and generously gave it to the British Museum.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF JOHN ACKLAND.

A TRUE STORY.

IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

In the following extraordinary narrative nothing is fictitious but the names of the persons.

ABOUT thirty-five or forty years ago, before the border territory of Texas had become a state of the great American Union, a Virginian gentleman, living near Richmond, received from a gentleman of Massachusetts, living near Boston, a letter pressing for punctual payment of a debt owing to the writer of it by the person to whom it was addressed. The debt was a heavy one. It was a loan for a limited period, contracted partly on mortgage and partly on other less valid securities. The period for which it was originally contracted had been frequently renewed at increasing rates of interest. The whole capital would shortly be due; and renewal

of the loan (which seems to have been asked for) was firmly declined, on the ground that the writer of the letter was now winding up his business at Boston preparatory to the undertaking of an entirely new business at Charleston; whither it was his intention to proceed very shortly. Such was the general purport of this letter. The tone of it was courteous, but peremptory. The name of the gentleman who received it we shall suppose to have been Cartwright, and that of the gentleman who wrote it to have been Ackland. Mr. Cartwright was the owner of an estate, not a very large one (which, with the reader's permission, we will call Glenoak), on the banks of the James River. The Cartwrights were an old Virginian family, much esteemed for their antiquity. Three generations of male Cartwright babies had been christened Stuart (because, sir, the Cartwrights had always fought for the Stuarts, sir, in the old country), and in Virginia a very moderate amount of family antiquity has always commanded for the representative of it as much consideration as is accorded in England to the lineage of a Beaufort or a Howard. The personal reputation of this present Philip Stuart Cartwright, however, was not altogether satisfactory. It was regretted that a man of his parts and property should have contributed nothing to the strength and dignity of the territorial aristocracy of old Virginia in the legislature of his state—a legislature of which the Virginians were justly proud. The estate of Glenoak, if well managed, would have doubtless yielded more than the income which was spent, not very reputably, by the owner of it, whenever he had a run of luck at faro. But the estate was not well managed, and, between occasional but extravagant hospitalities on this estate, and equally extravagant indulgence in the stimulant of high stakes and strong liquors at the hells and bars about Richmond, Mr. Philip Cartwright passed his time unprofitably enough; for pulling the devil by the tail is a fatiguing exercise, even to a strong man. Mr. Cartwright was a strong man, however, and a handsome man, and a tall. "Quite a fine man, sir," said his friends. "You may have seen Philip S. Cartwright as drunk as a hag, sir, but you will have always found him quite the cavalier." And, in truth, he had grand manners, and pleasant manners, too, this hard-living, devil-may-care gentleman, which embellished the impression of his vices. And he was a

bold rider and a crack shot; accomplishments which, in all Anglo-Saxon communities, ensure easy popularity to their possessor. Then, too, he had been left, early in life, a widower; and if, since then, he had lived too hard, or lived too loose, this was an extenuating circumstance. Moreover, he had but one child, a pretty little girl; and to her he had ever been a careful, tender, and devoted father. That was another extenuating circumstance. He was doubtless no man's enemy but his own; and the worst ever said of him was, that "Philip S., sir, is a smart man, smart and spry; but wants ballast."

Mr. Cartwright lost no time in answering Mr. Ackland's letter. He answered it with the warmest expressions of gratitude for the consideration and forbearance which he had hitherto received from the writer in the matter of this large, and all too long outstanding debt. He confessed that only a month ago he had been greatly embarrassed how to meet the obligations now falling due; but he was all the more rejoiced, for that reason, to be now enabled to assure his correspondent, that in consequence partly of the unusual excellence of the present rice harvest, and partly owing to other recent and unexpected receipts to a considerable amount, the capital and interest of the debt would be duly paid off at the proper time. As, however, Mr. Ackland, in his letter, had expressed the intention of going to Charleston about that time, he (Mr. Cartwright) begged to remind him that he could not reach Charleston without passing through Richmond on his way thither. He trusted, therefore, that Mr. A. would afford him that opportunity of offering to his New England friend a sample of the hospitality for which old Virginia was justly celebrated. He was naturally anxious to be the first southern gentleman to entertain his distinguished correspondent on Virginian soil. He, therefore, trusted that his esteemed friend would honour him by being his guest at Glenoak for a few days; the more so, as he was desirous not only of introducing Mr. A. to some of the most distinguished men of Virginia, but also of furnishing him with letters to many influential friends of his in South Carolina, whose acquaintance Mr. A. would probably find useful in the course of his business at Charleston. If, therefore, Mr. A. could manage to be at Richmond on the — proximo, he (Mr. C.) would have the honour of meeting him there, and conducting him to Glenoak,

where all would be in readiness for the immediate and satisfactory settlement of their accounts.

When Mr. Ackland received this letter, he was sitting in his office at Boston, and conversing with his cousin, Tom Ackland. Tom Ackland was a rising young lawyer, and the only living relative of our Mr. John Ackland, of the firm of Ackland Brothers. Ackland's other brother, who was also Ackland senior, had died some years ago, and Ackland junior had since then been carrying on the business of the firm, not very willingly, and not very successfully.

"What do you think of that, Tom?" said Mr. John Ackland, tossing over the letter to his cousin.

"Well," said Tom, after reading it through, hastily enough, "I think you had better accept the invitation, for I suspect it is about the only thing you will ever get out of Philip Cartwright. As to his paying up, I don't believe a word of what he says on that score."

"I don't much believe in it neither," said Mr. John, "and I'm sadly afraid the debt is a bad one. But I can't afford to lose it: and 'twill be a great bore to have to foreclose. Even then, too, I shan't recover half of the capital. What do you think, Tom?"

Mr. Ackland spoke with a weary tone of voice and an undecided manner, like a man who is tired of some load which he is either too weak or too lazy to shake off.

"Well, you must pass through Richmond, Jack, and Glenoak will be as pleasant a halt as you can have. Drink as much of Cartwright's wine, and smoke as many of his cigars as you can; for I doubt if you'll get back any of your money except in that kind. However, you *can* afford to lose it, so don't be so downhearted, man. And as for this Charleston business—"

"Oh!" said John Ackland, impatiently, "the best of the Charleston business is that it is not Boston business. I am longing, Tom, to be away from here, and the sooner I can start the better. Have you heard (I did yesterday at the Albion) that Mary, I mean Mrs. Mordent, and her husband, are expected back in Boston next month?"

"Ah, Jack, Jack!" exclaimed Tom, "you will get over this sooner than you think, man, and come back to us one of these days with a bouncing, black-eyed Carolinian beauty, and half-a-dozen little Ackland brothers and sisters too."

"I have got over it, Tom. At my time

of life I don't think there is much to get over."

"Your time of life, Jack! What nonsense."

"Well, I am not a patriarch, certainly," said Mr. John Ackland. "But I don't want to be a patriarch, Tom: and I don't think I ever shall be a patriarch. The best part of my life was short enough, Heaven knows, and I hope (now that is over) that the worst part of it won't be very long. I don't think it *will* be very long, Tom. Anyhow, I have no mind to meet Mr. and Mrs. Mordent again just now, so I shall accept Cartwright's invitation, and now, for mercy's sake, no more about business for to-day, Tom."

He did accept the invitation: and, at the date proposed, John Ackland arrived at Richmond late in the evening of a hot June day. He was much fatigued by his long journey and the heat of the weather; and not at all sorry to accept an invitation (which he received through Cartwright, who met him on his arrival) from Mr. D., the accomplished editor of the Richmond Courier, to sup and sleep at that gentleman's house before going on to Glenoak. Mr. D. having heard from Cartwright of Mr. Ackland's intended visit to the south, and knowing that he could not arrive in Richmond till late in the evening, had, with true Virginian hospitality, insisted on the two gentlemen passing the night at his house in town; and it had been arranged that Cartwright should drive Mr. D. and Mr. Ackland over to Glenoak on the following day. Mr. Ackland was very cordially received by his Richmond host, an agreeable and cultivated man. The fatigue of his long journey secured him a good night's rest; and, being an early riser, he had indulged his curiosity by a solitary stroll through the town, before the three gentlemen met at breakfast the next morning. After breakfast, he was conducted by his two friends to see the lions of the place. When they had visited the courthouse and the senate-house,

"Now, Mr. Editor," said Cartwright, "I shall ask permission to leave my friend here under your good care for an hour or so. I am going to fetch my little girl from school. You know she is at Miss Grindley's finishing establishment for young ladies; and though she is only ten years old, Miss G. assures me that Virginia Cartwright is her most forward pupil. We will take this little puss with us, if you please. What o'clock is it now?"

Cartwright looked at his watch, and Mr. D. looked at his watch. Yawning and looking at your watch are infectious gestures. John Ackland also put his hand to his waistcoat-pocket, and then suddenly remembering that his watch was not there, he felt awkward, and blushed. John Ackland was a shy man, and a lazy man in everything but the exercise of self-torment. He was in the habit of interpreting every trifle to his own disadvantage. This unfortunate way of regarding all external phenomena was constantly disturbing his otherwise habitual languor with an internal sensation of extreme awkwardness. And whenever John Ackland felt awkward he blushed.

"Twenty minutes to one," said Mr. D.

"Good; then," said Cartwright, "in one hour, as near as may be, I and my little girl will be at your door with the waggon, and phaeton. Can you be ready by then?"

"All right," answered the editor, "we shall just have time for a light luncheon."

"Will it be out of your way, Mr. D.," said Ackland, after Cartwright had left them, "to pass by D'Oiley's, the watchmaker's, in — street?"

"Not at all. How do you happen to know the name of that store, though?"

"I noticed it, whilst strolling through the town this morning. My chronometer has been losing time since I came south; and I asked Mr. D'Oiley to look at it, saying I would call or send for it before leaving town this afternoon."

When the watchmaker handed back the chronometer to Mr. Ackland, "That watch was never made in the States, I reckon, sir?" said he.

"No. It is English."

"Geneva works, though. I'll warrant your chronometer, sir, to go right for six years now. Splendid piece of workmanship, sir."

Mr. Ackland was much pleased with his pretty little new acquaintance, Virginia Cartwright. She was a dark-eyed lively child, who promised to become a very beautiful woman, and was singularly graceful for that awkward age in the life of a young lady which closes her first decade. Her father seemed to be immensely proud of, as well as tenderly attached to, the little girl. Every little incident on their way to Glenoak suggested to him some anecdote of her childhood which he related to his guest in terms, no doubt inadequately expressive of her extraordinary merits. Once he said, "Good God, sir, when I think

what would become of that child if anything were to happen——” But he finished the sentence only by whipping on the horses.

A large assembly of Virginia notables had been invited to Glenoak to meet Mr. Cartwright's New England guest. “I am going to be shown off,” thought John Ackland to himself; and he entered the house, hot and blushing, like the sun rising through a fog. Among these notables was Judge Griffin, “Our greatest legal authority, sir,” whispered Cartwright, as he pushed his guest forward, and presented him to the judge with expressions of overflowing eulogy and friendship.

Mr. Ackland, of Boston city, was a representative man, he said, “a splendid specimen, sir, of our great merchant princes of the North, whom he was proud to receive under his roof. More than that, he himself was under deep obligations (why should he be ashamed to avow it?), the very deepest obligations to his worthy friend and honoured guest, John K. Ackland!” Here Mr. Cartwright, apparently under the impression that he had been proposing a toast, paused, and prepared to lift his glass to his lips, but finding that he had, just then, no glass to lift, he informed the judge and his other guests that dinner would soon be served, and expressed a hope that in the meanwhile Mr. Ackland would favour him with a few moments of his private attention for the settlement of a matter of business to which, indeed, he partly owed the honour of that gentleman's visit. The two gentlemen were then closeted together for nearly an hour. When they rejoined the rest of the company at dinner, Mr. Cartwright appeared to have made (during their recent interview) a most favourable impression on his New England guest. Host and guest were already on terms of the most cordial intimacy with each other, and Cartwright himself was in the highest possible spirits. One of the company present on that occasion, a very young gentleman, who had had some betting transactions with the owner of Glenoak—transactions from which he had derived a very high appreciation of the remarkable ‘uteness of that gentleman—expressed to his neighbour at table a decided opinion that his friend Philip S. must certainly have succeeded, before dinner, in getting a pot o’ money out of the Yankee, who looked as well pleased as people usually do when they have done something foolish. After dinner, when the gentle-

men lit their cigars, and strolled into the garden, Cartwright linking one arm in that of Judge Griffin, and the other in that of John Ackland, exclaimed,

“I wish, judge, that you, whose powers of persuasion are irresistible, would induce my friend here to listen to reason. No, no!” he continued, as John Ackland made some gesture of impatience, “no, my esteemed friend, why should I conceal the truth? The fact is, judge, that Mr. Ackland and myself have had some pecuniary transactions with each other, in which he has been creditor, let me add, the most forbearing and considerate creditor that ever man had, and I, of course, debtor——”

“A highly honourable one,” put in John Ackland.

“My dear sir, that is the very point in question. Allow me to deserve the flattering epithet. Judge Griffin shall decide the case. You must know, judge, that the unfortunate force of circumstances (why should I be ashamed to own it?) has compelled me to keep this gentleman waiting an unconscionably long time for the repayment of a considerable sum of money which he has been good enough to advance to me, partly on my personal security. Under these circumstances, I was naturally anxious that he should not, finally, be a loser by the generosity of his patience. It is, therefore, needless to say that the rate of interest offered by myself for the renewed postponement of the liquidation of this loan was, in the last instance, a high one. I am happy to say that I have, this afternoon, had the pleasure of refunding to my friend the entire capital of the debt. On that capital, however, a year's interest was still owing. Of course I added the amount of it to that of the capital. But he (wonderful man!) refuses—absolutely refuses—to receive it. Tell him, judge (you know me), that he is depriving me of a luxury which I have too seldom enjoyed—the luxury of paying my debts—and that the capital——”

“Was a very large one,” interrupted Mr. Ackland, who had been listening with growing impatience to this speech. “Pardon me if I confess that I had not counted on the entire recovery of it—especially so soon. The interest to which Mr. Cartwright has referred was fixed in accordance with that erroneous impression. For which—ahem—my excuse must be, sir, that—well, that I am not—never was—a man of sanguine temperament. Sir, Mr. Cartwright has greatly embarrassed me. Under present circumstances, I really—I could

not—ahem—tax my friend here so heavily on a debt of—of—well, yes—of that amount, which has been so unexpectedly—ahem. I really—I—am not a usurer, sir, though I am a merchant."

Mr. Ackland said all this with the difficult hesitation of an exceedingly shy man, which he was, and blushing up to the roots of his hair. As soon as he had struggled through the effort of saying it, and thereby worked himself into a state of feeling so defensive as to be almost offensive, he extricated his arm from the embrace of his host, and, with an awkward bow, hastened to join the ladies in the arbour.

"Odd man, that," said Judge Griffin.

"Shy and proud," said Cartwright, "but as fine a fellow as ever lived."

John Ackland wrote from Glenoak to his Cousin Tom, expressing much pleasure in his visit there. The change of scene and air had agreed with him, notwithstanding the great heat of the season, and he already felt in better health and spirits than when he left Boston. He related the result of the interview which had taken place between himself and his host on the day of his arrival at Glenoak. He had the cash now with him in notes. But the amount was so large that he should of course exchange them at the Richmond Bank for a credit on their correspondents at Charleston. It was a strange notion of Cartwright's to insist on paying the money in notes.

"He seems to have been under the impression that I should not have been equally well satisfied with his signature. Which made me feel very awkward, my dear Tom."

He had felt still more awkward in consenting to take the last year's interest on that loan at the rate originally stipulated. Tom knew that he would not have raised it so high if he had ever had any hope of recovering the entire capital at the expiration of the term. However, there was no help for it. Cartwright would have it. Cartwright had behaved exceedingly well. Very much like a gentleman. He had really conceived a great regard for his present host. In despite of some obvious faults of character, and he feared also of conduct, there was so much good in the man. C. was a most pleasant companion, and had shown the greatest delicacy in this matter. The

man's affection for his daughter, too, was quite touching; and the child herself was charming. John Ackland then described his impressions of a slave plantation at some length. His abhorrence of the whole system was even more intense than before. Not because he had noticed any great cruelty in the treatment of the slaves on this plantation, but because the system was one which rendered even kindness itself an instrument of degradation; and these unfortunate blacks appeared to him to be in a mental and moral condition which, without justifying it, gave a hideous plausibility to the cool assertion of their owners that coloured humanity is not humanity at all. He avoided all discussion on this subject, however, for, as Tom knew, there was nothing he hated so much as controversy. At first he had felt "a little awkward" at being the only Northerner amongst so many slave proprietors. But now he felt quite at his ease with them all. Especially with Cartwright. 'Twas a pity that man had been born South. He had been brought up there to idleness and arrogance, but his natural disposition fitted him for better things. Glenoak was a very pleasant place. So pleasant, that he was reluctant to leave it. And, in fact, there was no real necessity for going to Charleston so soon. The weather was horribly hot. He had not yet been up to the exertion even of going to Richmond to deposit the notes he had received from Cartwright. He thought he should probably remain some days longer—perhaps a fortnight longer—at Glenoak.

On the evening of the day he wrote this letter, however, an incident occurred which changed Mr. Ackland's disposition to prolong his stay at Glenoak.

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